***Student Sample Context Essay-McCullers and Dawe***

**Prompt**

***The individual's sense of personal identity is dependent on their sense of belonging. Discuss.***

A person's identity is the personal feature that separates one person from another. Identity is an individuals' life and experiences that make up who they are. Belonging is the sense of feeling, being part of a group or an event, and can have both a positive or a negative influence on the individual's sense of identity. Every human has a unique identity and is different from others, depending on how their identities are shaped. An individual's sense of personal identity is dependent on their sense of belonging because it makes them feel different around others. Working together with others also shapes the sense of identity. Vince Lombardi once said: "Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success" [ref ]. There are individuals who find it difficult to belong, which has a negative impact on their identity. Two texts that explore this context of identity and belonging include, Bruce Dawe's, *Sometimes Gladness*, and Carson McCullers', *The Member of the Wedding.*

Belonging to a group, or an event, can have both a positive and a negative influence on every individual's identity. People who belong to a group of people who are generous and kind to others have a positive influence on their sense of identity. On the other hand, if people belong to a group of drug dealers, this would, most probably, have a negative impact on their sense of identity. In Carson McCullers' *The Member of the Wedding*, the main character, Frankie, meets a new friend, Mary Littlejohn, and begins to experience a sense of belonging. The sense of belonging has positively influenced the sense of having an identity because she begins to feel a part of the world of reality, able to work with others. In Bruce Dawe's, *The Flashing of Badges*, the man is trying to find a sense of belonging by changing his external identity: "The first thing the dead beat does/Is flash his badge" [ref ]. Although the man tries his best to find a sense of belonging, he ends up alienating others and being discarded. This man could not find a sense of belonging which, therefore, resulted in difficulties of achieving a sense of identity. People who try to belong to a group by changing the external identity often fail because they are not being who they really are. Leo F Buscaglia once said: "The easiest thing to be in the world is you. The most difficult thing to be is what other people want you to be. Don't let them put you in that position" [ref ]. Ultimately, belonging to a group, or an event, can have both a positive and a negative influence on every individual's sense of identity because belonging to a particular environment shape one's identity.

Individuals who struggle to find where they belong often have difficulty experiencing a sense of personal identity because there are no factors that can shape their identity. Individuals must have a sense of belonging to themselves before finding somewhere else to belong. It was said by Pearl Bailey that: "You cannot belong to anyone else, until you belong to yourself" [ref ]. In McCullers' text, Frankie struggled to find a place to belong because no one accepted her because she is a " ... tall and ugly meanie" [ref ]. She once belonged to a club but was rejected which had a negative influence on her identity because she cannot find somewhere else to belong, including herself. In Dawe's, *Drifters,* the wife struggles to achieve a sense of belonging because she would end up migrating with his family after a short period of time: "She won't even ask why they're leaving this time, or where they're heading for" [ref ]. This shows the significance of having a place to belong because the wife and the daughter cannot achieve a sense of identity since they keep moving on after a short period of time. This could have possibly altered the shape of their identity which they are struggling to find. Some people know where they belong but sometimes have difficulty achieving the same of having an identity. An anonymous author once said: "Our bodies know they belong, it is our minds that make our lives so homeless" [ref ]. This demonstrates the significance of how identity and belonging affect each other in many different ways.

When individuals have a sense of identity they, most likely, also have a sense of belonging because it is normally the external factors that shape the identity. Having a sense of identity is exactly the same as knowing yourself and how you function. A second anonymous author once said: "Being with you is like walking on a very clear morning-definitely the sensation of belonging there" [ref ]. When people know where they belong, they have achieved a sense of identity. In Bruce Dawe's, *Life Cycle,* a child was given an identity at childbirth as: " ... they are wrapped in the club colors" [ref ]. This sense of identity has made them aware that they belong to a group of football supporters of a particular football team. In McCullers' text, Frankie has found where she belongs and she has finally found her sense of identity when she meets her new friend, Mary Littlejohn. Although everyone has a different sense of identity and belonging, everyone is still the same as Thumbsucker once said: "We have to overcome the idea that everyone is the same" [ref ]. Everyone functions the same way in terms of internal environment which makes us human, all having a sense of morality. Whether the identity of the person is perfectly, or badly, shaped, they are still human beings just like others. Many people have their identities given at childbirth but that does not mean they are more happy than those who do not have a sense of belonging. Achieving a sense of identity is dependent on having a sense of belonging because that is how identities are shaped. Therefore, individuals who have found where they belong and know themselves very well will achieve a great sense of identity because they understand how reality functions in their own perspective.

The context of identity and belonging plays an important role in everyone's lives because it makes up who they are and why they have unique characteristics. Belonging to a particular group or if it does, indeed, have a positive and negative impact on the individual's identity. The two texts, Bruce doors, Sometimes gladness, and Carson McCullers The Member of the wedding, have definitely explored the importance of this context. Quite from celebrities also explored the significance of this context and have helped to determine that the individual's sense of personal identity is dependent on their sense of belonging.

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